

Girard College, Founder's Hall  
Girard and Corinthian Avenues  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1731

HABS  
PA,  
51-PHILA,  
457A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

ADDENDUM TO  
GIRARD COLLEGE, FOUNDER'S HALL  
Girard and Corinthian Avenues  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1731

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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ADDENDUM TO:  
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HABS PA-1731  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
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1849 C Street NW  
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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### ADDENDUM TO GIRARD COLLEGE, FOUNDER'S HALL

HABS No. PA-1731

- Location:** 2101 S. College Avenue, at the northern terminus of Corinthian Avenue; Founder's Hall and the other original Thomas U. Walter school buildings are located on the eastern portion of the college grounds which include the entire area bounded by S. College, W. College, N. College, and Ridge Avenues.
- Present Owner/  
Occupant:** Girard College.
- Present Use:** Museum, archives, and special events space for Girard College, an institution providing primary and secondary education for orphaned and underprivileged children.
- Significance:** Founder's Hall at Girard College is one of the greatest expressions of nineteenth-century Greek Revival architecture in the United States. As a civic ensemble, it ranks among the most notable in the country, and is integrally linked to the metropolitan expansion of Philadelphia and the growth of its institutions for education, social reform, and humanitarian aid. Furthermore, this landmark building and the unique orphans' school for which it is the centerpiece, honors its founder Stephen Girard; its endowment heralded an epoch of unparalleled philanthropy by America's wealthiest citizens.
- Historian:** James A. Jacobs, Summer 2000.

#### PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection:

The Board of Trustees formally hired Thomas U. Walter as architect of the College buildings on March 28, 1833. Ground was broken on May 6, 1833 and the cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1833. "Thomas U. Walter turn[ed] over the keys for Founder's Hall to Building Committee" on November 13, 1847 and on January 1, 1848, the first students began studies at the College.<sup>1</sup>

2. Architect:

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce Laverty, Michael J. Lewis, and Michele Taillon Taylor, *Monument to Philanthropy: The Design and Building of Girard College, 1832-1848* (Philadelphia: Girard College, 1998) 14-15.

Thomas U. Walter. Thomas U. Walter was among the best trained and skilled native-born architects in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. By early in the 1830s, he had not only completed an apprenticeship under his master bricklayer father, but also trained in the offices of both William Strickland and John Haviland.<sup>2</sup> Walter also pursued artistic studies under William Mason.<sup>3</sup> His most prominent building commissions were the 1850s and 1860s Capitol extensions and dome in Washington, D.C., however Walter first made his mark in the national architectural theater in 1833 by winning the Girard College competition.<sup>4</sup> In addition to a busy practice, he worked diligently for the raising of professional standards in architecture and was responsible for creating the ideological embryo of what eventually became the American Institute of Architects.<sup>5</sup> Walter became a major player in the Greco-Roman revival of the mid-nineteenth century, but finished his career as “second in command” to John McArthur, Jr. overseeing the construction of the Philadelphia City Hall—a masterpiece of American Second Empire institutional architecture.<sup>6</sup>

3. Original and subsequent owners:

Girard College. Stephen Girard's will of February 1830 stipulated that the management of his estate be enforced by the City of Philadelphia. On January 10, 1833, it was decided that four council members (to be elected annually) and the mayor would make up the general “Board of Commissioners of the Girard Estate;” this board thus became responsible for management of the orphans' school endowment.<sup>7</sup> Decades later, on June 30, 1869, the Pennsylvania governor signed the act that created the Philadelphia Board of Directors of City Trusts; this body took control of the estate in 1870 and still manages the school's fiscal affairs to this day.<sup>8</sup>

4. Original and subsequent occupants:

January 1, 1848–present                      Girard College

5. Builder, contractor, suppliers:

General superintendent: (1835) Jacob Souder  
Superintendent of marble work: (1835) Findley Highlands

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<sup>2</sup>Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700–1930* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Company, 1985) 821.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Robert Brooks Ennis, “Handlist for Thomas Ustick Walter, Architect,” Exhibition of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 29 Oct.–28 Dec. 1979.

<sup>6</sup>Tatman, 822.

<sup>7</sup>Cheesman A. Herrick, *History of Girard College* (Philadelphia: Girard College, 1935) 2.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 63.

Clerk: (1835) Samuel Overn<sup>9</sup>

Marble: (1834) Jacobs & Cornog, West Chester, Pennsylvania<sup>10</sup>

6. Original plans and construction:

Landscape

When Stephen Girard died in 1831, the areas north of Philadelphia above Spring Garden Avenue and west of Broad Street remained largely rural. In 1843, the irregularly platted blocks of the crossroads village of Francisville—turned 45° to the city grid—existed as the northernmost developed blocks west of Broad. Beyond Francisville, the landscape retained a bucolic mix of farms, country houses, cemeteries, and rural lanes.<sup>11</sup> Most higher density development north of the city during the 1840s occurred east of Broad in the Spring Garden District.<sup>12</sup> Reflections printed in 1883 nostalgically characterized the area's early landscape: "the whole neighborhood was then a pretty piece of country, upon which the country-seats of noted Philadelphians stood."<sup>13</sup>

The district's rural nature would not hold as Philadelphia's population expanded. However, the first wave of significant expansion west of Broad was not so much in the form of the ubiquitous Philadelphia residential row or heavy industry, but rather in a variety of institutional constructions—of which Girard College was among the earliest. Within the northern reaches of the Spring Garden District, the groundbreaking and influential Eastern State Penitentiary fronted Coates Street (Fairmount Avenue) and had its perimeter wall and initial cells completed by 1829.<sup>14</sup>

In the year of his death, Girard, in a codicil to his will, changed the location of the future college from a center city plot bounded by Market, Chestnut, Eleventh, and Twelfth streets to one in Penn Township.<sup>15</sup> Girard's will stipulated that his school would be "secure and private," separated from the city by a ten foot wall, but soon realized that the original center city site "was in the trajectory of Philadelphia's urban expansion."<sup>16</sup> Thus, he removed the college to a more isolated site on the periphery of the developed city. The

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<sup>9</sup>Lavery, 95, for Souder, Highlands, Overn.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>11</sup>See research notes for visual.

<sup>12</sup>Richard Webster, *Philadelphia Preserved: Catalog of the Historic American Buildings Survey* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976) 287.

<sup>13</sup>"Improvements in the Northwestern Part of the City—Professor Wagner's Recollections—The Progress of Time," *Public Ledger and Daily Transcript* 18 Aug. 1883, from Scrapbooks of the Wagner Free Institute of Science, 1847–1980, box 8, vol. 3.

<sup>14</sup>J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609–1884, vol. III* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884) 1835.

<sup>15</sup>Stephen Girard, Codicil to 16 Feb. 1830 Will, 20 Jun. 1831; the Penn District was "erected out of Penn Township" by an Act of Assembly on February 26, 1844. The district was enlarged by Act of Assembly on February 17, 1847 and became the 20<sup>th</sup> Ward under the Act of Consolidation on February 2, 1854.

<sup>16</sup>Michael J. Lewis, Girard College National Register of Historic Places District Nomination (not acted upon), 15 Dec. 1988, sect. 7.

land purchased from William Parker encompassed forty-five acres known as Peel Hall and, like Francisville, was justified to the diagonal cut of Ridge Road.<sup>17</sup> This property sat at the top of a hill and upon completion of Founder's Hall, the unsurpassed view from its roof of the surrounding urban and rural landscapes attracted Philadelphians in droves. This popular pastime was immortalized in B. F. Smith's 1850 painting, *Philadelphia from Girard College*.

The platted grid that eventually extended up to and beyond the college grounds did not become densely developed until after the Civil War, however within a decade of the school's opening, Green Hill Presbyterian Church (1847–1848) designed by John Notman and St. Joseph's Hospital (1849) were founded a few blocks to the east on Girard Avenue and further contributed to the institutional richness of the area.<sup>18</sup> Other notable organizations later established centers in the general area, including the Wagner Free Institute of Science, constructed from 1859–1865 and located at the intersection of Montgomery Avenue and Seventeenth Street and the Jesuit Church of the Gesu, which moved to Eighteenth and Stiles streets in 1868 from Center City. The current church was dedicated in 1888.

Thus, while the area was largely rural when construction began in 1833, Stephen Girard's orphans' school helped to anchor an institutional tradition in the area north of Spring Garden and west of Broad.

### Building

For nearly a month after the Board of Trustees hired Thomas U. Walter on March 28, 1833, the architect worked on changes for the plan, elevation, and siting of the classroom building and its flankers. On April 24, 1833, Walter presented what became the final design for Founder's Hall—a Greek Corinthian temple with a peripteral colonnade.<sup>19</sup> The elevations for the adjacent and symmetrically-placed dormitories were not completed until 1835. When dedicated in 1847, the cost of the college buildings exceeded the architect's 1833 estimate of \$900,000 by \$1,033, 821.78.<sup>20</sup> Six years after the school opened, Girard College was enthusiastically praised:

There is no country that possesses, either among the ruins of ancient or the work of modern days, a more beautiful structure than this, or one in which chasteness of design, richness of decoration, and exquisite skill of workmanship, are more happily combined; and it is a subject of congrat-

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<sup>17</sup>Codicil, 20 Jun. 1831.

<sup>18</sup>See field notes for visual.

<sup>19</sup>Lavery, 77.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 113.

ulation that every part of it was executed by  
American workmen.<sup>21</sup>

As expected, Founder's Hall, a monumental masonry structure, has seen relatively little irreversible change since its completion in 1847.

7. Alterations and additions:

**1848**—Within the school's first year of operation, it became clear that the massive classrooms in Founder's Hall were nearly useless as completed for instruction on account of their "live" acoustic reverberation. In his final report to the building committee in 1848, Thomas U. Walter washed his hands of the obvious deficiency and blamed the provisions of Girard's will for the unfortunate reality of the classroom echo.<sup>22</sup> In December 1848, school directors maneuvered around the stipulations of the will and installed wooden frames over which canvass was stretched in an effort to deaden the reverberation.<sup>23</sup> These measures soon proved inadequate and within a few years the northwest first-floor room and the southeast and northeast second-floor rooms were split in half with a permanent partition wall and ceiled with a flat plaster surface, over which the vaults loomed out of sight and sound.<sup>24</sup>

**1850**—After two years of lighting the campus buildings with kerosene and oil lamps, the Philadelphia City Councils agreed to allow the Commissioners of the Girard Estate to extend gas piping into the college compound and install plumbing and fixtures in all the buildings.<sup>25</sup>

**1851**—Stephen Girard was reinterred in a marble sarcophagus centrally placed in the south vestibule of Founder's Hall; the marble statue of Girard on the tomb had been completed in 1846 at a cost of \$9000.<sup>26</sup>

**1859**—The rear gate, originally located on-axis with the north door of Founder's Hall, was moved to the west to provide better access for the service building (Building Five); this secondary gateway was moved again in 1912 to its present location at Twenty-Fifth Street and N. College Avenue.<sup>27</sup>

**1871**—The entrance lodges flanking the main entrance gate at the top of Corinthian Avenue were moved further apart and the interstices filled with iron fencing; this change was purportedly in response to complaints that Founder's Hall could not be fully viewed from outside the college walls.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>*Stranger's Guide in Philadelphia and Its Environs* (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1854) 76.

<sup>22</sup>Laverty, 115.

<sup>23</sup>Herrick, 113.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Herrick, 128.

<sup>26</sup>Raymond I. Haskell, "Founder's Hall," 1948, Girard College Archives, Founders Hall exterior photographic files, 5.

<sup>27</sup>Herrick, 102.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 103; see field notes for visuals.



**1880s**—In 1884, Thomas U. Walter was asked by the Board of Directors of City Trusts to evaluate the condition and wear of the building.<sup>29</sup> Among his numerous comments was concern for broken marble roof tiles. Walter believed the damage resulted from the stream of visitors allowed to view the city from the roof, however further studies found that the marble was not weathering well and a decision was made to encase the slabs under a standing seam metal roof.<sup>30</sup>

**1887**—On May 19, seven electric light towers were raised around the campus providing dramatic exterior illumination; the interior electric lighting was installed in 1894.<sup>31</sup>

**1890**—Stephen Girard's "relics"—the contents of his personal estate—were moved from their original display location in the southwest third floor room to the southwest first floor room.<sup>32</sup> Girard's will stipulated that "a room most suitable for the purpose shall be set apart for the reception, and preservation of my books and papers" and that a flanking building be used "to place my plate and furniture of every sort;" the papers were ultimately stored in the basement of Founder's Hall and the "plate and furniture" in the "relic" rooms.<sup>33</sup>

**1928**—The "Directors Room" (southeast first-floor room) had its Victorian woodwork and bookcases refinished and four large murals at the top of the walls were executed by George Gibbs, which depict events in the life of Stephen Girard.<sup>34</sup>

Sometime between 1948 and 1955, the delicate corner scrolls of the peristyle's Corinthian columns were removed, presumably because they had begun to crack off and posed a liability hazard for the school.<sup>35</sup>

**1980s**—Stephen Girard's "relics" were installed in permanent museum space fitted-out in the western second-floor rooms. The eastern rooms received climate control at this time and were made ready to receive Girard's papers previously stored in the basement of Founder's Hall.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Laverty, 116.

<sup>30</sup>Herrick, 114.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 129, for exterior; Thomas J. DiFilippo, "Significant Dates in the Histories of Stephen Girard and Girard College," July 2000, Girard College Archives, for interior lighting.

<sup>32</sup>Herrick, 114.

<sup>33</sup>Will, 16–17.

<sup>34</sup>Haskell, 6–7; see field notes for visuals.

<sup>35</sup>Elizabeth Laurent, personal interview, 3 Aug. 2000; Founders Hall exterior photographic files, for window of dates.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

1999—Large bathrooms were constructed in the space of earlier facilities under the staircases of the North Vestibule. Two powder rooms were also added this time in the second floor of the North Vestibule.<sup>37</sup>

B. Historical Context

When Stephen Girard died on December 26, 1831, the City of Philadelphia was experiencing massive renewal and reinvigoration. The first decades of the nineteenth century saw its transition from being the temporary national capital into a flourishing center for the arts and social welfare—a transformation that included a shift in civic architecture from domestic-scaled red brick buildings to institutional and public structures executed in stone and marble.<sup>38</sup> A large group of humanitarian institutions recently constructed or in the planning stages in 1831 included the Orphan Asylum, the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, the House of Refuge, the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, the Alms House, the United States Naval Asylum, the Eastern State Penitentiary, and the Moyamensing Prison.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, Philadelphia was on the verge of a major expansion in industry, prosperity, and population—by 1840, the combined populace of the City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia County was roughly 258,000.<sup>40</sup> Within this environment of rapid change and municipal prosperity, Stephen Girard's will was read and the foundations of his orphans' school laid.

Girard's vision for an orphans' school was well within contemporary national and local educational trends. In his will, he outlined a basic curriculum that included reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, navigation, surveying, practical mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, French, and Spanish; he discouraged the study of Greek and Latin.<sup>41</sup> This type of education ideally provided solid grounding in basic skills and advanced training for an eventual career—reflecting both the interests and background of Girard as well as an emphasis on “practical education.” This type of “useful” knowledge was espoused as early as 1749 with Benjamin Franklin's *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*. While also not disregarding classical studies entirely, Franklin formulated a curriculum based in English language, grammar, and history; courses in the sciences and skilled trades; and a regimen of daily physical exercise.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Edgar P. Richardson, “The Athens of America, 1800–1825,” *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, eds. Russell F. Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982) 251–252.

<sup>39</sup>Norman Johnston, Kenneth Finkel, and Jeffrey A. Cohen, *Eastern State Penitentiary: Crucible of Good Intentions* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1994) 12–13.

<sup>40</sup>Nicholas B. Wainwright, “The Age of Nicholas Biddle, 1825–1841,” *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, eds. Russell F. Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982) 280.

<sup>41</sup>Will, 20.

<sup>42</sup>Dickson A. Mungazi, *The Evolution of Educational Theory in the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999) 69.

The debate between the benefits of learning applicable skills in school or a more preparatory, liberal arts education remained central to the development of American schooling and education. In 1836, laws for universal common elementary education passed the Pennsylvania legislature and theoretically provided access to basic skills instruction for every child. Also in that year, Central High School was founded in Philadelphia—again on the premise of providing the possibility of what had previously been restricted grammar school or academy education to more citizens—however, its exclusivity, traditional curriculum, and restriction to only male students revealed a continued holding on of traditional, non-career-oriented education.<sup>43</sup> Within this state and national context in the development of public schooling, the executors of Girard's will worked out the school's final form.

Despite Girard's explicit wishes in his will, interpretation of its text and formation of the school's courses ultimately boiled down to a political debate, which also extended to the design of the school buildings. While Girard's will laid out the physical and curricular development of his orphans school, it did not do so in close detail, thus resulting in what amounted to extended and heated deliberation between Whigs, led by Nicholas Biddle, and the local Jacksonian Democrats.

Whigs promoted the style [Greek Revival] for its democratic associations, formal simplicity, canon of prototypes sanctioned by tradition, and utilitarianism, all of which they thought expressed Girard College's extensive educational agenda. Democrats countered that their opponents' Greek design and academic plans were aristocratic and elitist. They promoted instead a plain and functional architecture, conveying populist goals of providing a solid but rudimentary education for large numbers of laboring class orphans.<sup>44</sup>

Outrage over the great expense of Nicholas Biddle's desire for a "pure Greek" building was widespread in Philadelphia, but in the end and despite his economic downfall, Founder's Hall was completed as a monumental Greek peripteral temple in November 1847; the plain articulation and near severity of the flanking dormitories was the building committee's concession to the "bad press" generated by Thomas U. Walter's Biddle-driven final design for Founders Hall.<sup>45</sup>

As stipulated in the will, the entire campus, including the 1 ¼ mile long marble-topped field stone enclosure wall, had to be completed before admitting students and it was not until January 1, 1848 that Girard College finally opened to ninety-five white male orphans; within two years over 300 boys were enrolled.<sup>46</sup> Its curriculum was ultimately based on a number of European models including the French

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<sup>43</sup>Michele Taillon Taylor, "Building for Democracy: Girard College, Political, Educational and Architectural Ideology," diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1997, 117.

<sup>44</sup>Taylor, vi.

<sup>45</sup>Laverty, 83–84.

<sup>46</sup>Herrick, 40–41; see field notes for visuals.

polytechnical school and the “child centered” theories of Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi.<sup>47</sup> In addition to courses aforementioned in Girard’s will, training in skilled manual trades—printing, carpentry, dressmaking, and later photography, among others—was available.<sup>48</sup> The length of tenure at Girard varied and was based on the “track” pursued, and whether the students needed to be apprenticed outside the school; most students left between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.<sup>49</sup> The first class graduated from Girard in March 1854 and from that year forward, Girard College has prepared young white orphan boys—and more recently African American boys (1968) and female students (1982)—for successful lives beyond the Girard’s insulating stone walls.<sup>50</sup> Though classes ceased being taught in Founder’s Hall in 1916 with the completion of the new high school building, it remains the physical and psychological heart, and the most visible symbol of the college.

## PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION<sup>51</sup>

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Girard College Founder’s Hall stands as one of the premier expressions of nineteenth-century Greek Revival architecture in America. The building, its original flanking structures, and the ten-foot high perimeter wall comprise a civic ensemble indicative of both period planning ideals and institutional aspirations.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Roughly 185’ x 239’ at the base of the stylobate; 163’ x 216’ at the outer edge of portico floor; 114’ x 216’ around the cella wall; 99’-0” in height from the base of the portico steps to the top of the pediment.
2. Foundations: The foundation walls are of stone with brick groin and barrel vaults and are up to 14’-0” thick.
3. Walls: All of the exterior stone is marble, much of it locally quarried.<sup>52</sup> The cella portion of the building is surrounded by a peripteral Corinthian colonnade containing thirty-four fluted columns that have 6’-0” diameters and 55’-0” shafts. The column shafts are composed of fifteen drums pinned together with lead dowels; the foliage of the 8’-0” capitals (made up of four

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<sup>47</sup>Taylor, 87, 90.

<sup>48</sup>H. Warren Button and Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., *History of Education & Culture in America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983) 157.

<sup>49</sup>Taylor, 66.

<sup>50</sup>Haskell, 5, for first graduating class; DiFilippo, for admittance years.

<sup>51</sup>Additional summer 2000 photographs of Girard College Founder’s Hall are located in the field notes file.

<sup>52</sup>Laverty, 93, for marble type.

sections attached with brass fixtures) and the flutes were both carved in place after assembly.<sup>53</sup> The porticos are ceiled with iron coffers individually cast and bolted to the structure. Above the columns, a denticulated Corinthian entablature wraps around the building.

North and South Elevations: These walls are composed of a masonry core fronted by ashlar-coursed marble. A single 16' x 32' foot doorway is surrounded by a massive, yet simply articulated, frame that is topped by an elaborate hood. These walls terminate in plain pilasters. The pediments are devoid of sculpture.

East and West Elevations: The severity of the featureless north and south walls is relieved on the east and west cella walls by four recessed groupings of windows. The group opening onto the vestibules is organized vertically with three windows separated by simple recessed panels; the first and second story windows are framed by thin corner pilasters. Two large recessed window groupings at the wall's center contain at each level four windows lighting the interior classrooms and a fifth blind rectangular niche. These bands of windows are likewise divided vertically by unadorned recessed panels and horizontally by pilaster strips, pared down to thin corner pilasters at the ends in a manner similar to those framing the vestibule windows.

4. Structural systems: Load-bearing brick walls and vaulting. The building is composed of a series of shallow brick groin and barrel vaults stacked one on top of the other. The third floor classrooms are domed; the dome pendentives spring directly from the floor. The 906-ton marble roof is supported by parallel rows of brick relieving arcades which direct the weight of the roof to the massive walls and away from the skylight openings.<sup>54</sup> In the gable ends, the attic spaces above the iron peristyle ceiling coffers are defined by steeply pitched brick groin vaults, providing thrust transfer through a point loading system utilizing the portico columns.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The massive portals on the north and south walls are enclosed with four double-hinged paneled doors at the bottom with two rows of similarly carved recessed panels above. In the two building vestibules, four pairs of columns demarcate the areas of the main entrance, the classroom entrances, and the stairwells. On the first floor, these columns are Ionic, and on the upper floors they are executed in two distinct Corinthian patterns. The interior doorways have carved Grecian door surrounds and contain paneled wooden double doors.

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<sup>53</sup>Lavery, 105, for column construction.

<sup>54</sup>*Stranger's*, 73, for weight.

- b. Windows: The east and west walls on the first and second stories are pierced on each story by ten sets of casement windows—four in each classroom and one on each side of the entry/stair halls. At the second story, the windows extend to the floor and are fronted on the exterior by decorative iron balustrades. On the third story, each room is ventilated by two small windows at floor level. Light wells cut into the portico floor for the basement are covered with iron grates and correspond with the location of the classroom windows.

Each of the four stairwells is topped by a shallow saucer dome with a round skylight opening at the center. The four third-floor room domes are pierced at the top by a round skylight. All eight skylights were originally filled with decorative leaded, opaque glass on the interior with another set of rectangular lights set into the plane of the roof.

6. Roof: The original marble roof slabs are now covered with a standing seam metal roof. Each marble slab is 4'-6" x 4'-0", 4" thick, and weighs 776 pounds.<sup>55</sup> The ends of the roof planes terminate in carved bands of highly abstracted acanthus-type leaves.
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Despite the early division of the northwest room and the addition of bathrooms under the northern staircases, the building's original room configuration still reads strongly on the first floor. On the second floor, the early division and dropped ceilings of the eastern rooms and the mid-1980s museum and archive retrofitting have largely obscured the original groin vaulted spaces; the vestibules on these floors are essentially unchanged. The classroom and vestibule spaces on the third floor most fully convey their original state as they have been more or less abandoned since early in the twentieth century.
  2. Flooring: Marble tile throughout.
  3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster. Much of it may have been originally stenciled as evident in extant Victorian patterning of the southwest first-floor room. The southeast first-floor room (Director's Room) contains four wall murals depicting events in the life of Stephen Girard.
  4. Trim and woodwork: The decorative stair balustrades are iron with wood rails. The door surrounds throughout Founder's Hall are of wood and articulated with Greek motifs; those in the south vestibule on the first floor are painted to mimic marble. The denticulated cornice in the vestibule groin vaults and stairwells are of painted wood. Marble stringcourses extend across the plain plaster walls in the stairwells; they correspond with the marble

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

entablature carried above the vestibule columns and engaged piers. The windowsills are executed in marble.

5. Mechanical: As completed, Founder's Hall was heated by hot air furnaces in the basement connected to the rooms through flues.<sup>56</sup> According to a source published in 1848, "the flues for ventilation in the interior walls [have] their aperatures at the apex of the arch in each room."<sup>57</sup> A forced air system remains in place and is augmented in the North and South Vestibules by steam radiators. Two air conditioner compressors added in the 1980s are housed in the southwest third-floor classroom and provide climate control for the archives located on the second floor—no other space is air-conditioned. The lighting fixtures in the North and South Vestibules date from the 1950s.

### PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Works Consulted

##### *Books and Unpublished Dissertations*

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#### **PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION**

The documentation of Girard College, Founder's Hall was undertaken during the summer of 2000 as part of a larger program to record historic landmarks and historically significant structures in North Philadelphia. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), E. Blaine Cliver, Chief of HABS/HAER, and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS; funding was made possible through a congressional appropriation for documentation in Southeastern Pennsylvania and supplemented by a William Penn Foundation grant to the Foundation for Architecture for educational purposes. The project was planned and administered by HABS historian Catherine C. Lavoie and HABS architect Robert R. Arzola. The project historian was James A. Jacobs (George Washington University). Large format photography was undertaken by Joseph Elliott. The measured drawings were completed by a team of architects: Project Supervisor Matthew Crawford (The School of the Art Institute of Chicago), and architectural technicians Kwesi Daniels (Tuskegee University), Caroline LaVerne Wright (Tulane University), and Kenneth William Horrigan (ICOMOS-Sydney, Australia).

ADDENDUM TO:  
GIRARD COLLEGE, FOUNDER'S HALL  
Girard & Corinthian Avenues  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-1731  
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